

REMARKS

Claims 1-4, 6 and 7, all the claims pending in the application, stand rejected. Applicant has amended claims 1, 3, 4 and 6. Also, new claims 8-23 have been added. It is believed and intended that no new matter has been added to the present application by this amendment. Reconsideration and allowance of all claims are respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-4, 6 and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e), as being anticipated by Suzuki et al (6,227,968). This rejection is traversed for at least the following reasons.

Suzuki et al is cited by the Examiner with regard to its disclosure of a two-person dance game embodiment in connection with Fig. 9 of the reference. In the present rejection, the Examiner asserts that the disclosure in Suzuki at col. 9, lines 6-27 together with the disclosure of a subroutine for a monitoring process as illustrated in Fig. 12 (col. 10, line 36) and an evaluation process as illustrated in Fig. 13, (col. 11, line 37), when applied to a two-person game, would anticipate the present invention. In particular, the Examiner points to col. 9, line 8, where Suzuki states that with the progress of the game, the marks relating to levels of difficulty, which are different individually, are set on a basis of the evaluation for each player, and in accordance therewith, the level of difficulty of the dance images is changed. The Examiner observes that levels of difficulty may vary between low, medium and high, as explained at col. 9, line 38, with regard to Fig. 11. Finally, the Examiner asserts that Suzuki has a data memory that stores timing data that defines a game operation timing at which each of a first and second payer is required to operate the game. In this regard, Applicant notes that Suzuki uses several memories, including (1) a performance data memory 104, which stores preformance data corresponding to the selected music (col. 9: 46-50), (2) a stepping position indication data memory 105, which stores a large amount of stepping position indication data corresponding to each of the level of difficulty (col.7:25-30), and (3) a dance image memory 108 that stores a plurality of dance images corresponding to each of the level of difficulty (col.8:1-7).

Notwithstanding the Examiner's analysis, there is no teaching or suggestion of a step or structure for changing an operation timing by adding one or more new game operation timings between the timings defined by the timing data. Thus, claims 1, 3, 4 and 6 have been amended

to define the operation timing changing step and structure as being operative to change the game operation timing by adding one or more new timings between the game operating timing defined by the timing data. This feature is particularly relevant to an enhanced competition between a first and a second player. On the basis of Applicant's amendment to the claims, Applicant respectfully submits that a significant difference exists between Suzuki and the presently claimed invention.

As previously argued by the Applicant, the present invention places an emphasis on competition between first and second players. In this regard, one focus of the present invention is to present first and second players with different game operation timing guidance which results in an increased feeling of competitiveness (page 5, lines 3-20). The various kinds of changes in timing guidance that may be provided are explained beginning at page 17, line 6, including changes with respect to the timing guidance arrow 62, including changes in the number, speed, direction and brightness of such indicia. As explained at page 16, beginning at line 8, the content of any change in timing guidance indicia, including numbers, speed, direction or brightness, is determined according to current gauge level, indicated by the level indicator 78.

Beginning at page 21, Applicant teaches that timing guidance can be increased by adding timing guidance arrows 50, 62 to the original timings. Six ways to add to the timing are disclosed, and the use of a random selection process is also identified. As noted at page 24, when one player steps well, the other player is required to make an increase in the number of steps, so that the game with the other player becomes more difficult. This increases the sense of competition. Nothing of the sort is taught in Suzuki.

New Claims

Applicant has added new dependent claims 8-23 that are consistent with the emphasis now placed on adding timing instructions. In particular, these claims are directed to the several different manners of changing timing and to the use of a random basis for making the selection., as disclosed at least beginning at page 22 of the specification.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

Ronald Kasper Registration # 44,186
for

Alan J. Kasper
Registration No. 25,426

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC
Telephone: (202) 293-7060
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860

WASHINGTON OFFICE

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